

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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SUBJ: PRESS STATEMENTS ON PALESTINIAN ITEM AT 29TH UNGA BY
JORDANIAN PREMIER AND BY ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE PRESS INTERVIEWS, JORDANIAN PREMIER ZAYD RIFAI AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ABD AL-MUNT'IM RIFAI STATE THAT INCLUSION OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE ON UNGA AGENDA IS NOT RELATED TO QUESTIONS OF 1) WHO REPRESENTS PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ON WEST BANK, AND 2) DISENGAGEMENT. BOTH STRESS NECESSITY OF PRE-UNGA AND PRE-GENEVA ARAB COORDINATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN SEPARATE INTERVIEWS SEPT 12 WITH LEBANESE WEEKLY AL-
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HAWADITH, JORDANIAN PM ZAYD RIFAI AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR IN-

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ABD AL-MUNIM RIFAI DISCUSS QUESTION OF INCLUDING PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS SEPARATE ITEM ON 29TH UNGA AGENDA. JORDANIAN SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILIES GIVE HEADLINE COVERAGE TO STATEMENTS.

2. IN HIS INTERVIEW, PM RIFAI FIRST REVIEWS OFT-STATED GOJ POSITION TOWARD WEST BANK AND RETURN TO JORDANIAN CONTROL: JORDAN STANDS READY TO ACCEPT WILL OF PALESTINIANS RE UNIFICATION, FEDERATION, OR INDEPENDENCE, WITH PLEBISCITE INTERNATIONALLY-SUPERVISED REFERENDUM TO BE JUDGE. IN ADDITION, RIFAI RE-AFFIRMS NECESSITY OF ISRAELI PULLBACK FROM JORDAN RIVER PRIOR TO GENEVA. RIFAI NOTES THAT SHOULD ANY DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BE REACHED, JORDAN WILL NOT IMPLEMENT IT WITHOUT OFFICIAL REQUEST BY ARAB BROTHERS. SUCH A REQUEST REQUIRES COORDINATION AMONG ARAB STATES, AND FOR THAT REASON IT IS "NECESSARY" FOR PLO TO PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA CONFERENCE.

3. TURNING TO THE 29TH UNGA, PM RIFAI STATES THAT JORDAN'S CONSENT IN RECENT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETING TO HAVE PALESTINE ISSUE INSERTED AS INDEPENDENT ITEM ON UNGA AGENDA HAS NO RELATION AT ALL TO SUBJECT OF REPRESENTATION OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. RIFAI NOTES THAT OTHER DELEGATES AT ARAB LEAGUE MEETING, INCLUDING THOSE OF PLO, AGREED WITH THIS DISTINCTION, SINCE GOJ POSITION RE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION WELL-KNOWN. PM CLAIMS THAT INSERTATION OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE AT UNGA WILL NOT ADVANCE OR DELAY CHANCES FOR DISENGAGEMENT, AND RE-STATES GOJ POSITION ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION: IF ARAB BROTHERS UNANIMOUSLY DECIDE THAT PLO RESPONSIBLE FOR OCCUPIED LANDS IN CAPACITY AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, JORDAN WILL CONSIDER HERSELF RELIEVED OF WEST BANK RESPONSIBILITY. BUT GOJ AGREEMENT TO INCLUDE PALESTINIAN ITEM AT UNGA HAS NO EFFECT ON THIS POSITION.

4. IN SEPARATE INTERVIEW, ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS RIFAI EXPRESSES "CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM" ON UNGA PALESTINIAN ITEM. ARABS MUST BE CAREFUL TO DEFINE WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING BY PLACING ITEM ON UNGA AGENDA, SINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS NO RELATION BETWEEN AGENDA ITEM AND DISENGAGEMENT ON JORDANIAN FRONT. PROBLEM OF DISENGAGEMENT IS EMBODIED IN SC RES 242, WHICH STANDS AS CONTINUING DEMAND FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. IT IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, SAYS RIFAI, FOR ARABS TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING BY PLACING PALESTINIAN ISSUE BEFORE UN IN THIS MANNER, SINCE EFFORT COULD OTHERWISE RESULT IN PUBLICLY EXPOSING ARAB FEUDS, TO NO APPARENT END. RIFAI HIMSELF DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE HIS OWN RATIONALE FOR INCLUDING ITEM AT UNGA, BUT INSTEAD CONCLUDES INTERVIEW BY FURTHER EXHORTING ARAB BROTHERS TO COORDINATE EFFORTS PRIOR TO BOTH UNGA AND GENEVA IN ORDER THAT PUBLIC AIRING OF PALESTINIAN

ISSUE DOES NOT HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF WEAKENING ARAB STAND.
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